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ABSTRACT

The effect of special instruction and an integrated program on attitudes toward trainable mentally retarded (TMR) students was assessed with 42 adults (PTA board members and teachers) and 127 elementary children. Regular class students in small groups from first, third, and sixth grades were systematically integrated into a TMR class where they engaged in the same cognitive, motoric, and affective domain activities as the TMR, for the development of personal, social, and occupational skills. Significant changes between groups was shown by first and third grades. The most significant change occurred with the experimental adult group who attended a slide-talk presentation and visited a TMR classroom. (Author/SBH)

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ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED: "MAINSTREAMING IN REVERSE."

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Abstract: An assessment was made of change in attitude toward Trainable Mentally Retarded students of 42 adults and 127 children as a result of special instruction and an integrated program. Regular class students in small groups from 1st, 3rd, and 6th grades were systematically integrated into a TMR class where they engaged in the same cognitive, motoric, and affective domain activities as the TMR, for the development of personal, social, and occupational skills. Significant changes between groups was shown by 1st and 3rd grades. The most significant change occurred within the Experimental adult group.

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ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED:

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Trainable Mentally Retarded students are customarily placed in classrooms separate and apart from their non-retarded peers. They lack opportunities to become personally acquainted with each other and to share common educational experiences. There is evidence, however, that attitudes toward the mentally retarded are influenced by the degree of contact with them (Strauch, et al, 1970). Without meaningful contact with the mentally retarded, normal children display a dimension of attitudes quite similar for both black (minority group) and retarded populations (Harth, 1971).

Thurston (1959) developed a Sentence Completion Form (TSCF) which he used to study parents' attitudes and emotional reactions to their physically handicapped, severely retarded children. A Likert Format scale was developed by Efron and Efron (1967) to study attitudes, beliefs, and information levels toward both educable and trainable mentally retarded. The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) was developed by Yuker, Block, and Young (1966) and is used extensively in research on attitude change.

Using the above mentioned scales as models, as Attitude Survey and a Childrens' Attitude Survey (CAS) were developed to probe attitudes in five areas: Personal Contact with TMR; Appearance and Behavior of TMR; TMR's Feelings and Expression of Feelings; Acceptance as a Family Member, and Schooling for TMR's.

The purpose of this study was 1) To ascertain if the negative attitudes of normal school children and their teachers could be changed in a positive direction as the result of a carefully structured program of integration with the TMR students. 2) To ascertain if the negative attitudes of the members of the PTA Board and the teachers of the Experimental groups could be

changed in a positive direction as the result of a slide-talk presentation and a visit to the TMR classroom to observe, work and/or play with them.

3) To evaluate the ability of the Attitude Survey and the Childrens' Attitude Survey to detect any changes in attitudes as a result of these programs.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

THE METHOD

The Subjects

AS forms were mailed to the 29 members of the PTA Board to be filled out, marked with their secret number, and returned at the next Board meeting. AS forms were given to all teachers and other personnel who served as the control group. The three experimental teachers whose classes had been randomly selected were given numbers ending with TE. When these were returned, they were added to the PTA forms as these teachers would participate in the study in the same way and to the same extent as the PTA Board members.

The CAS forms were given to each experimental and control group teacher just prior to their grades two-week program of activities. 1st and 3rd grade teachers administered the CAS to each child individually; 6th graders marked their own.

Nineteen PTA Board members attended the next meeting, returned their AS forms, listened to and watched a slide-talk presentation showing activities that take place in the TMR classroom and describing the children's problems. On later dates, several of them visited the classroom, taking part in classroom activities.

AS forms were mailed to these nineteen members for post-test; thirteen were returned (a 68% response). Adding the three TE teachers to the PTA Board gave a total of 22 in the initial experimental group. Only one TE teacher returned the post-test, giving a ratio of 14/22 (64% response). The initial control group was 20; only 10 post-tests were received (a 50% response).

Subjects at the three grade levels, after final matching of pre-tests and post-tests, were as follows:

	E group	C group
1st grade	19	20
3rd grade	23	17
6th grade	25	23

According to sex:

	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1st grade	10	9	10	10
3rd grade	11	12	9	8
6th grade	11	14	12	11

No attempt to match classes or students within classes was made. All classes under stable conditions had no more than 29 students, divided as evenly as possible by sex. Flux was created by illnesses, withdrawals and admissions. Post-tests were matched by number with pre-tests for all groups. Pre-tests and post-tests that could not be matched were discarded. Data was tabulated and analyzed for only those subjects who completed both tests, and, in the case of the E groups, took part in the programmed activities.

The Instrument

Questions indicating positive or negative attitudes toward TMRs were solicited from nine persons who worked closely with TMR children. Other questions were adapted from the TSCF, Efron and Efron's scale, and the ATDP. 80 questions were submitted to the nine persons for pairing and checking as positive or negative, true or false. 50 questions upon which everyone agreed were used for the AS form. These were resubmitted for rechecking in order to establish reliability of the test. Validity was buit in by choosing only those questions upon which there was 100% agreement. By eliminating questions of a factual nature a 25 item childrens' form resulted.

II. PROCEDURE

A complete schedule was drawn up for each group in each grade of art, hand crafts, table games, group games for both indoors and outdoors, and cooking activities. This was a highly structured program that could be repeated at each grade level and which was within the ability range of the

TMR pupils. Work and play activities and room arrangements were set up ahead of time. TMR children were actively engaged in these before the experimental group arrived. The regular school children were asked to choose places alongside or across from a TMR pupil in order to become acquainted. They were prompted to observe what the TMR was doing and to do the same thing, or if the TMR needed help, they could help them. All children were treated in the same manner; each was expected to do his own work, help others if necessary, let others help him, and to clean up and put tools and materials away when finished. TMRs were encouraged to help and play with the regular children.

All grades had an orientation for the entire class, teacher and teacher's aide. Three groups from each class were sent on consecutive days for a 50 minute period, one grade at a time. These same three groups returned the next week for a second session. The entire class, teacher and teacher's aide then returned for the slide-talk and discussion of children's problems. The final session featured a get-together for entertainment by children of both the TMR and regular class - songs, dances, pantomime, skits.

RESULTS

Results of the AS of the PTA Board compared with the staff control group show that both groups come from the same population ($z = .06$; $p < .48$ on a one-tailed test). A difference ($p < .08$) was found between the experimental and control groups' post-test AS scores, which was not highly significant. The difference within the experimental group between pre-test and post-test was highly significant. ($p < .0002$). These results are shown in Table 1.

Results of the CAS experiment are shown in Table 2. A statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between the 1st grades experimental and control group's final scores. There was also a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the 3rd grades experimental and control group's final scores. Initial test differences showed that the two groups in each grade came from the same population. The changes between initial scores and final scores within the 3rd grade experimental group were signi-

ficant at the $p < .01$ level. The 1st grade experimental group tended toward a significant change ($p < .07$).

Change within the 6th grade experimental group was $p < .10$. The initial test results between the experimental and control groups showed that these classes did not come from the same population ($p < .14$). On the final test the experimental group moved toward a more positive attitude, the control group became more negative. They were definitely from the same population following the final test.

DISCUSSION

An analysis of the patterns of negative responses on the CAS revealed the areas in which negative attitudes were predominant and showed degrees of change as well as direction of change.

Area of personal contact with TMR: 1st grade children showed highest percentages of negative response in expressing reluctance to want to play with TMRs, go to their classroom to work with them, and being afraid to play with them. 50% of these negative responses changed to positive on post-test of the experimental group. The control group remained essentially the same. A majority of all children wished to visit the TMR unit and work with them.

Area of TMRs appearance and behavior: All grades, both groups, indicated that it was always possible to tell a retarded child by his looks; more than half of the 1st grades, one-third of the 3rd grades, but only one-fourth of the sixth grades felt that retarded children always looked peculiar, even ugly. Every group showed a change to a more positive attitude. Most of the children felt they could trust a TMR not to steal and lie. Initially, about one-fourth of the 1st and 3rd grades experimental groups thought TMRs were mean; this changed to less than .05 after engaging in activities with them.

Area of TMRs feelings and expression of feelings:

Nearly one-half of all grades, all groups, thought TMRs used worse language than they did, but that not all TMRs used bad language. Very few thought a TMR child becomes "emotionally disturbed" when he couldn't learn. This attitude did not change in 3rd and 6th grade experimental groups, possibly because they saw no evidence of disturbed behavior in the classroom and did not become aware of the emotional problems many of these children have. Most children recognized that a TMR child has feelings like everyone else and feels bad when called names.

Area of acceptance as a family member:

About one-third of all groups felt they would be ashamed if they had a sibling who was like a TMR child. The greatest change was in the 3rd grade experimental group (.30 to .09). Most of the groups felt a TMR child was a big nuisance to his family and that he wouldn't be able to learn to do things for himself but would need constant help and protection. These attitudes did not show much change. Very few felt that they would want a TMR sibling sent to live somewhere else. Most of the children thought the TMRs were loving and would bring happiness to their family. Willingness to be good to him and help him at home all they could was shown by most.

Area of schooling for TMRs

Negative attitudes were generally low. About 50% of the 1st grade, both groups, felt a TMR child could learn all they need to know right at home, as did 26% of the 3rd grade. These percentages dropped to .15 and .04 respectively. 6th graders changed from .20 to .12 on this. Most of the children realized that the TMRs need to go to school in order to have other children to work and play with.

CONCLUSION

It appears that the special activities program used with the experimental groups had some influence in changing the attitudes of the PRA Board members toward mental retardation and the mentally retarded at the TMR level,

as well as the attitudes of the regular school children toward the TMRs in the TMR classroom.

The Childrens' Attitude Survey (CAS) appears to indicate the areas of greatest negativeness and greatest positiveness in attitude toward the TMRs, as well as showing a certain consistency in all groups for sameness in their responses.

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"Mainstreaming in Reverse" - M. Cronk

Results of CAS experiment TABLE 2.

Means, Standard Deviations, Standard Errors of the Means, Difference between Means, Standard Errors of the Difference between Two Means, small sample, uncorrelated Data, with resulting z scores and p level of significance.

FIRST GRADE		THIRD GRADE		SIXTH GRADE	
Exp. (N=19)	Ctl. (N=20)	Exp. (N=23)	Ctl. (N=17)	Exp. (N=25)	Ctl (N=23)
Initial Test		Initial Test		Initial Test	
Mn. = 7.05	7.40	Mn. = 4.83	4.76	Mn. = 4.60	3.79
σ = 4.25	2.39	σ = 3.64	3.56	σ = 2.75	2.39
σ_m = .96	.54	σ_m = .74	.89	σ_m = .56	.51
Final Test		Final Test		Final Test	
Mn. = 5.42	6.85	Mn. + 2.83	4.65	Mn. = 3.72	3.91
σ = 2.27	3.10	σ + 2.19	4.00	σ = 1.90	2.76
σ_m = .52	.71	σ_m = .45	1.00	σ_m = .39	.59

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		FIRST GRADE					CONTROL GROUP
	M_E	σ_m	M_C	σ_m	$M_E - M_C$	σ_{D_m}	z	p (one-tailed)
Initial Test	7.05	.96	7.40	.52	.35	1.10	.31	.38
Final Test	5.42	.52	6.85	.71	1.41	.89	1.61	.05* (sign)
Internal Change ($M_2 - M_1$)	1.63	1.09	.55	.89	1.08	1.40	.77	.22
z score	1.50		.61		.77			
p	.07		.27		.22			

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		THIRD GRADE					CONTROL GROUP
Initial Test	4.83	.74	4.76	.89	.07	1.14	.06	.48
Final Test	2.83	.45	4.65	1.00	1.82	1.10	1.65	.05* (sign.)
Internal Change ($M_2 - M_1$)	2.00	.86	.11	1.32	1.89	1.57	1.20	.11
z score	2.32		.08		1.20			
p	.01* (sign.)		.47		.11			

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		SIXTH GRADE					CONTROL GROUP
Initial Test	4.60	.56	3.78	.51	.82	.76	1.07	.14
Final Test	3.72	.39	3.91	.59	-.19	.71	.27	.39
Internal Change ($M_2 - M_1$)	.88	.68	-.13	.78	1.01	1.03	.98	.18
z score	1.29		.17		.98			
p	.10		.43		.16			

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Results of AS experiment TABLE 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, Standard Errors of the Means, Differences between Means, Standard Errors of the Difference between Two Means, small sample, uncorrelated Data, with resulting z scores and p level of significance.

Experimental Group (N = 14)		Control Group (N = 10)	
Initial Test	Final Test	Initial Test	Final Test
$M_{E_1} = 9.5$	$M_{E_2} = 5.5$	$M_{C_1} = 9.4$	$M_{C_2} = 7.3$
$x^2 = 1411$	$x^2 = 503$	$x^2 = 1052$	$x^2 = 641$
$\sigma_1 = 3.36$	$\sigma_2 = 2.46$	$\sigma_1 = 4.3$	$\sigma_2 = 3.46$
$\sigma_m = .898$	$\sigma_m = .657$	$\sigma_m = 1.36$	$\sigma_m = 1.09$

	Experimental Group (M_E)		Control Group (M_C)		Diff between Means ($M_E - M_C$)			
	M_E	σ_m	M_C	σ_m	$M_E - M_C$	σ_{D_m}	z	p
Initial Test	9.5	.898	9.4	1.36	.1	1.63	.06	.40
Final Test	5.5	.657	7.3	1.09	1.8	1.27	-1.41	.08
Internal Change	4.0	1.11	2.1	1.73	1.9	2.05	.92	.18
z score		3.60		1.21		.92		
p		.0002***		.113		.18		

*p .05 (one-tailed test)

**p .01

***p .001